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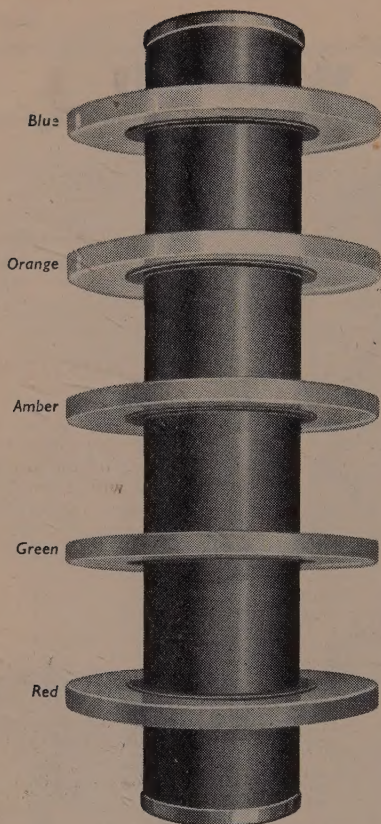
THEATRE WORLD



Portrait by Studio Carlet

Georges Guétary

● LONDON has immediately taken to her heart this gifted young French actor who has a fine tenor voice and a romantic air well in keeping with the nostalgic Victorian charm of the new A. P. Herbert-Vivian Ellis show. *Bless The Bride*, which Charles B. Cochran is presenting at the Adelphi in association with Anthony Vivian, will be the subject of the illustrated supplement in our next issue.



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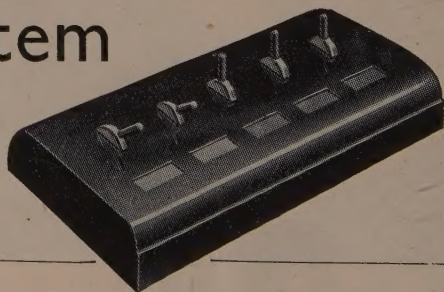
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Edited by Frances Stephens

June 1947

THE unexpected withdrawal of a number of West End productions has brought out the old familiar talk of a theatre slump. The increasing demands on the pockets of the people are bound to affect audiences though it is significant that the falling off is largely in the cheaper seats. The advent of double summer time and some warm spring evenings must also have had their effect. But in view of the fact that the majority of the casualties were musicals (always the most expensive productions to stage) the moral probably is that such shows will have to be superlative in quality to hold their own, especially in the face of two such brilliant achievements as *Bless the Bride* and *Oklahoma*. *Romany Love*, *Red Mill* and the revival of *The Dancing Years* are among the shows that have been withdrawn.

Among some of the interesting new productions scheduled for June is the American musical hit, *Annie, Get Your Gun*, which comes to the Coliseum on 7th June. Priestley's new play, *Ever Since Paradise*, opens at the New Theatre on 4th June, with Roger Livesey and Ursula Jeans starring. 11th June will see the revival of Bridie's *A Sleeping Clergyman* at the Criterion, with Robert Donat, and London will also have an opportunity of seeing Judith Guthrie's version of Andreyev's, *He Who Gets Slapped*, which made a deep impression on Broadway. This play opens at the Duchess Theatre on 12th June with Robert Helpmann as the Clown. The famous French actress Suzy Prim is also in the cast.

Another interesting new play from New York will be seen over here when *Deep are the Roots*, presented by Tennent Plays

Over the Footlights

Ltd., opens a prior-to-London tour at Brighton on 2nd June. Joan Miller, who was much praised for her performance in *Pick-Up Girl*, is to have an important part in this play, the authors of which are James Gow and Arnaud D'Usseau. Peter Cotes will produce, and three coloured members of the original New York Company, Gordon Heath, Evelyn Ellis and Helen Martin, and the American actress, Betsy Drake, will be in the cast.

Plays produced too late for review this month include *Twelfth Night* at the Open Air Theatre (22nd May); *Dark Emmanuel*, at the New Lindsey (21st May); *Edward, My Son*, His Majesty's (30th May); *The Bird Seller*, Palace (29th May); *King Lear* (Bristol Old Vic), Embassy (26th May); and *Boys in Brown*, Arts (28th May).

The Ballet Rambert began a season at Sadler's Wells Theatre on 19th May, when the programme included Walter Gore's new ballet, *Plaisance*. It was pleasing to see *The Play's The Thing*, with Clive Brook, transferred to St. James' on 19th May.

It must also be recorded that *Oklahoma* has proved one of the most sensational theatrical events in London for many years. The astonishing popularity of this delightful American musical is entirely deserved.

A word, too, for the achievement in opera at the Cambridge, where the new production of *Rigoletto* is a musical feast not to be missed. Incidentally, at a party after the first night, Mr. Jay Pomeroy said that he hoped to announce in a few weeks' time the inauguration of an opera school in this country. This notable development further emphasises how increasingly opera-conscious we are becoming.

F. S.

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New Shows of the Month

"Bless The Bride"—*Adelphi*, 26 April.
 "Less Than Kind"—*Arts*, 29 April.
 "The 49th State"—*New Lindsey*, 29 April.
 "Oklahoma!"—*Drury Lane*, 30 April.
 "Salome" and "Sweeney Agonistes"—*Rudolf Steiner*, 1 May.
 "We Proudly Present"—*Duke of York's*, 2 May.
 "Fly Away Peter"—*King's, Hammersmith*, 12 May.
 "Oak Leaves and Lavender"—*Lyric, Hammersmith*, 13 May.
 "Rigoletto"—*Cambridge*, 16 May.

"Bless the Bride"

THIS is without doubt the most delightful English musical of recent years, and Mr. Cochran is to be congratulated on an artistic triumph of the first rank.

The story—of a Victorian Miss in 1870 who elopes with a fascinating young Frenchman on her wedding day—is unoriginal enough, but is made the occasion of many witty Herbert lyrics which are set to some of the loveliest music Vivian Ellis has so far given us. Nothing is spared in the production: Tanya Moiseiwitsch's costumes and scenery are a feast for the eye. The show must also be reckoned a personal triumph for Wendy Toye, who has directed its intricacies with precision and a real flair for effective groupings.

There is something particularly refreshing in meeting with almost entirely unknown stars in a musical of this calibre. Lizbeth Webb, who understudied Carole Lynne in *Big Ben*, has achieved stardom overnight, which is not to be wondered at, for she has a voice of rare quality, particularly on the top notes, clear articulation, real acting ability and a winsome stage presence. Georges Guétary has set many hearts fluttering with his charming accent, romantic appearance, and fine tenor voice. These two appear as the young lovers, Lucy Veracity Willow and Pierre Fontaine. Lucy is to marry The Honourable Thomas Trout (Brian Reece), an odd and amusing "villain" for a traditional musical, but runs off with Pierre to France, though on the most innocent basis, for she is heavily chaperoned by Suzanne (Betty Paul), an old flame of Pierre's. Lucy's eminently respectable Victorian family, with its many ramifications, is duly horrified, and Father (Eric Fort), Mother (Edna Clement), and the fiancé pursue her to France, arriving just in time to see Pierre march off to the Franco-Prussian war. Back in England, Lucy mourns her lover, who is reported killed, and agrees at last to marry The Honourable Tom, now a somewhat

chastened young man. However, we are not surprised when Pierre returns safe and sound, or when Tom makes the noble sacrifice and all ends happily for Lucy.

"This is my Lovely Day"; "Ma Belle Marguerite"; "I was never kissed before"; "Ducky" (charmingly rendered by Anona Winn); and "God Bless the Family," are the best remembered songs in a show packed with lilting melodies. F. S.

"Less than Kind"

NORMAN MARSHALL'S new season at the Arts provides that rare experience in the theatre, a great play by a living author. *Less Than Kind* is not great in the sense that it is a play of tremendous action, stirring battle scenes and thrilling scenic effects. It is a play of subtlety, of emotion and counter emotion, of a father and his two daughters and the young man who enters their lives. To give an account of the plot would be quite useless, as the play is practically devoid of action, but the undercurrent established the moment the play begins is so strong that one is completely held until the curtain rings down on the last scene. It is definitely an adult play that will blow the cobwebs out of the brain by providing food for thought. There is no phoney situation and no phoney intellectual claptrap, but a real situation of complex characters who speak for themselves and justify their own actions. Norman Marshall has produced the play with immense care and clear thinking. He knows what he wishes to achieve and, with the aid of Annabel Maule, Margaret Diamond, Ralph Truman and David Peel, succeeds in giving us an evening of complete unison of thought. P. D.

"The 49th State"

ANYBODY who holds the opinion that a work of Art should have an apparent consistency not observable in real life may be expected to find *The 49th State*, by James Aldridge, a little unsatisfactory. The action takes place in the Prime Minister's bedroom about 80 years hence. (Why bedroom? I do not know.) There has been no total war or global convulsion in those 80 years, but our boasted Parliamentary system has atrophied and the only remaining vestige is an ancient Prime Minister, who lingers on at No. 10 Downing Street, tended by a buxom young Scotswoman, who is a spy in the employ of the Secretary of the Boiler-Makers' Union, who seems to rule the country. An amusing set-up. It appears, however, that the morally defunct Prime Minister has power to con-

(Continued on page 8)



the scene in the Hall of Fame with (L. to R.): Richard Little as the Guide, Alfred MacGuigan as the Boy, Doris Hare as the Wife, and Leslie Henson as the Common Man.



Napoleon, Nelson and Wellington as played by Nigel Neilson, Wallis Eaton and Gavin Gordon.

“1066 And All That”

(Right): Patricia Stokoe, Diana Dell, Claudine Goodfellow and Leslie Henson in the Ballet of the Roses. This up-to-date version of 1066 And All That, the delightful “musical comedy of English history,” now at the Saville Theatre, marks the welcome return to the West End of Leslie Henson and Doris Hare.

(Pictures by Barratt's)



vey the sovereignty of the State to another Power and, when the U.S. refuse to admit Great Britain into the Union, actually and legally to dissolve the State of Great Britain.

Kynaston Reeves works hard to make the Prime Minister appear life-like and interesting and he is well supported by Jenny Laird as his secretary. Philip Dale well sustains the part of Jamie, the Big Boss, and Hugh Miller makes a welcome appearance as Lord Firth, representing Big Business.

The 49th State forces one to reflect that Shaw's *Apple Cart* is quite a good play.

H. G. M.

"Oklahoma"

THERE seems very little left to be said on the subject of this triumphant new arrival at Drury Lane, where box office records look like being broken for all time.

The critics have been unanimous in their approval; the public have reacted as one, and all confess that willy-nilly they have fallen under the spell of this strangely haunting American musical with its baffling simplicity of approach.

As we see it, the success of *Oklahoma*, which is based on the play "Green Grow the Lilacs," by Lynn Riggs, is due to its harmonious "oneness." It has that same imprint of teamwork which is the hallmark of the John Gielgud and Old Vic productions. The team in this case includes composer, author, actors, dancers, producer, choreographer and stage designer. *Oklahoma* is "all of a piece" and therefore artistically well-nigh perfect.

It cannot be long before the tunes are on every lip. London has not heard more invigorating melodies. It is difficult to think of them as a product of Broadway and not of the simple pioneering folk in Oklahoma nearly half a century ago. If it comes to that, it is indeed hard to imagine that the fresh young company at Drury Lane also hail from the Big City and not from the wide open spaces, and their spontaneity is such that it is almost impossible to credit that some of them have played in the American production for years.

Apart from the lovely songs, "Oh! What a Beautiful Mornin'," "Out of My Dreams" and "Oklahoma" among them, one recalls most vividly the clear bright colours of *decor* and costumes, and the breath-taking Agnes de Mille ballet at the end of Act I, a splendid piece of "continuity."

Harold Keel as Curly, Betty Jane Watson as Laurey, Dorothea MacFarland as Ado Annie and Henry Clarke as Jud Fry stand out as top rank young actors and singers, but every member of the company counts where there are no "stars" billed. America could not have sent us a more worthy or acceptable production; the Rodgers, Hammerstein 2nd, Agnes de

Mille, Rouben Mamoulian combination have our grateful thanks. F. S.

'Salome' & 'Sweeney Agonistes'

IT is impossible to fail worthily with Oscar Wilde's rarely acted play, *Salome*. It must succeed; to fail would be shameful. The Centaur Theatre Company does succeed, triumphing over crudity in setting, costuming, lighting and general production by the physical and imaginative power of the actors. Looking back and coldly weighing the matter up, one might set down the performance as bad on many points; but cold, technical excellence cannot thrill like the passionate, imaginative force at the command of this naturally gifted company. Passion in the theatre, or anywhere in Art, is so rare. One submits to it with rapture and respect.

Iokanaan the Prophet appeared in a long white robe, like a Victorian Baptist ready for immersion and more than slightly resembling Brother Stiggins. His wig was wrong and his general appearance was almost calamitous, but again passion and power triumphed. He had a fine voice and he spoke with more than conviction.

Bernice Rubens acted, spoke and danced with sultry grace and compelling precision, never for a second out of character—the very difficult character of Wilde's *Salome*. Hers was a wonderful performance—"a gem of purest ray serene."

The chorus of Jews, with their Masks by Sybil Kennedy and John Livesey, and their fine voices, provided one of the best features of the production.

Michael Yannis brought Herod the Tetrach down the centuries and out of the Levant. He looked the part and spoke with pleasant and varied force. Herodias, notwithstanding the emerald in her navel, seemed occidental 1947. But all performers were good. I thoroughly recommend the company. It is rare indeed that one can witness a masterpiece performed with such passionate sincerity.

Sweeney Agonistes, by T. S. Eliot, was cleverly put over. Vera Lesley and Rene Goddard gave striking performances as Dusty and Doris, and Charles Ollington's vibrant voice gave Sweeney's tortured lines a beautiful clarity. I also liked the Snow and Swarts business by Michael Kennedy and John Lagey.

Peter Zadek is to be congratulated upon two remarkable works of production.

H. G. M.

"We Proudly Present"

ONE would have to be a very unsuspecting member of the theatregoing public to be completely taken in by some of the improbabilities of Mr. Novello's latest "peep behind the scenes."

There are many amusing situations, however, and the play is extremely well acted.

It tells of two young demobbed officers (Peter Graves and Anthony Forwood) who start up in theatre management, and of the many hair-raising troubles which attend their first production. Most of the latter derive from the machinations of their temperamental leading lady (Ena Burrill), who sets out to wreck the highly intellectual play they have chosen by playing it as a burlesque, which effort turns it into the biggest success in Town.

Phyllis Monkman appears as the management's shrewd secretary, who, being an ex-leading lady herself, is well equipped to deal with Miss Burrill's tantrums. Mary Jerrold contributes a delightful study of a kindly elderly lady, while Irene Handl steals most of the laughs with an interpolated but superb caricature of a Continental opera star with a heart of gold beneath her voluble and flamboyant exterior.

The play has many tilts at the profession, and a brave gesture in that one of the characters at the beginning of the play, supposedly speaking from the darkened stage of a derelict theatre, says, "I have never been in an empty theatre before!" This line could have a very painful appropriateness in certain circumstances; though in view of past history we feel sure Mr. Novello is on safe ground! F. S.

"Fly Away Peter"

AN ingenious, even a little artless, story of the Hapgood family at Streatham is redeemed by more than a touch of warm, everyday humanity. Mr. A. P. Dearsley shows us the four Hapgood children at ages from fifteen to twenty-two, when young blood years to get away from that overpowering maternal love which is the blight of so much human potentiality. Arthur wishes to change his work and try Nigeria; Phyllis falls for a divorced Norwegian; Ted grows up to imperil Dandy's good name; youngest Myra redeems abominable treatment of her boy friend with marriage and a new life in South Africa.

Mrs. Hapgood is possessive motherhood as every suburb knows it; Mr. Hapgood is wise and kindly paternity as every 8.30 in the morning carries it to the essential bread-winning. The story ends with the parents planning a new and smaller home for themselves, the young people facing life in their several directions. Mr. J. H. Roberts serves his author admirably in a dual capacity as producer and Mr. Hapgood. In his charge, the comedy is sure to come to terms with an average audience. Margaret Barton plays Myra, leading a group of young players of whom any author should be proud. Peter Hammond as her boy friend, John Craig as Arthur, Christine Russell as Phyllis, and Aubrey Morris as Ted, made a suburban group authentic and spirited. John Arnott's Scandinavian connections



Edward Mandinian

DORIS DOREE

who made a big impression as the Princess in the Covent Garden Opera Company's production of *Rosenkavalier*, will also be seen as Leonora in the Company's sixth opera, *Il Trovatore* on 23rd June. *Turandot*, the fifth opera, was produced on 29th May, too late for review in this issue.

The production of *Il Trovatore* will be by Julius Gellner, well-known as the producer of *Othello* at the Old Vic in 1942, and *War and Peace* in 1943, and who has also been producing for the BBC since 1940. The scenery and costumes are by Derek Hill, the well-known young artist.

The combined season of Opera and Ballet which commenced last autumn with the return of the Sadler's Wells Ballet from their triumphant tour to Vienna, will terminate on Saturday 5th July.

The Sadler's Wells Ballet end their season on Saturday 21st June, and the last two weeks, 23rd June to 5th July, will be devoted to the presentation of opera by the Covent Garden Opera Company.

seem a little remote, but there is no denying the overpowering maternity of Madeline Thomas's Mrs. Hapgood. F. J. D.

"Oak Leaves and Lavender"

THE criticisms of this production of Sean O'Casey's latest play have been notable for a marked difference of opinion. Some thought it a good play badly acted, others a bad play which gave scant opportunity to an excellent cast.

This reviewer thought the play to be at fault. The author has something worth while to say, and he knows how to say it in the grand manner. But his medium seems ill-adjusted to his theme, and a fine

confusion develops in which his characters miss their way. May this not have been because an author as bred-in-the-bone Irish as Mr. O'Casey has essayed to portray the English in the moment of their greatest crisis?

The setting is an ancestor-haunted English manor house at the time of the Battle of Britain and the inmates a motley crowd, including fighter pilots, land girls, air raid wardens, and an Irish butler (without whom, no doubt, the author would have felt like a ship without an anchor). Mary Hinton, Sheila Sim and Edward Golden play with rare sympathy and understanding while Fred Johnson dominates the scene as Feelim O'Morrigan, the butler, though we would have preferred a softer-toned brogue to point the moral of the author's prose-poetry.

F. S.

OPERA

"Rigoletto"

THE New London Opera Company triumphs once again with a full-blooded production of Verdi's *Rigoletto*, given in Italian. The Company was undoubtedly fortunate to have the brilliant direction of Professor Carl Ebert, whose expert touch is evident throughout.

Marko Rothmuller, the Rigoletto, was an instantaneous success, as much for his superb acting as for his magnificent voice,

which, though unusually powerful, is capable of fine modulation, particularly in his passages with Gilda. Antonio Salvarazza brings to the Duke's music a most pleasing interpretation in the Italian style. Daria Bayan's Gilda is at all times superbly acted. Miss Bayan's voice has a quality of purity most notable in the top ranges. This is a delightful rendering of a most difficult singing part, which is certain to show greater flexibility as time goes on. Bruce Boyce's Monterone and Martin Lawrence's Sparafucile are other outstanding performances. Joseph Carl's *decor* is masterly.

F. S.

Gabrielle Brune has joined the cast of *Clutterbuck* in place of Patricia Burke, who has left to make a new film. Benn Levy's very popular comedy has passed its three hundredth performance at Wyndham's.

* * *
Give Me The Sun, by Henry Marshall, the play recently produced at The Boltons Theatre, tells of a US Army deserter in London. Six people taking shelter from a storm are held as his hostages. The play to follow is called *A Fish in the Family*, an amusing comedy by Sir Basil Bartlett on the novel theme of the land visitations of a mermaid.

* * *
The Services Sunday Society in co-operation with Reunion Theatre Association will present at the Whitehall Theatre on 8th June a new comedy by Geoffrey Lea, *Love, While You Wait*.

The cast will include Patrick Waddington, May Hallatt, Mona Lillian, Vivien Graham, Morag Wild, Tony Kilshaw, John Benson, Anthony Sharp, Monica MacLeod and Penelope Davidson.

The producer is Noel Howlett.

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“Born Yesterday” AT THE GARRICK

PICTURES

BY

JOHN VICKERS

● GARSON KANIN'S most amusing comedy satire continues to draw capacity audiences to the Garrick Theatre. Few American comedies of recent years have had a greater appeal and few have been so fortunate in the all-round excellence of the cast. Laurence Olivier, who is presenting the play, first saw it on Broadway where it is still a smash hit, and tribute must be paid to his clever direction. Yolande Donlan, a delightful newcomer from America, partners to perfection Hartley Power, who gives the performance of his career. The clever *decor* is by Roger Furse



Eddie : Since when I'm only Vice-President?
Ed. Devery : You're slipping.

Harry Brock's shady assistants have come with him to Washington. (Stanley Maxted as Ed. Devery and Michael Balfour as Eddie Brock).



Harry Brock : She look all right to you?
Billie : Look who's talking!

Harry is a bit dubious about his dumb, late chorus girl friend's social graces when it comes to entertaining the Senator who is about to walk into his net.



Billie : You want to wash
 your hands or anything
 honey?

Even illiterate ex-junk man Brock can see that there is something lacking in Billie as hostess when she receives the slightly astonished wife of the Senator. (Bessie Love as Mrs. Hedges)

Harry: That's why I came: to see that I get what I paid for.

Harry, whose illicit financial dealings have assumed colossal proportions since he first began making a corner in junk shops, begins to work on the senator. (Launce Laraschal as senator Hedges).



Harry: Honey, this is Paul Verrall. He wants to talk to you.

When he begins to see that Billie's lack of manners is likely to prove an embarrassment in the rarified social atmosphere of Washington, Harry calls upon the services of Paul Verrall, a lofty-minded young journalist, to give her some instruction in social etiquette. (William Kemp as Paul Verrall).





Billie: Lemme ask you. Are you one of these talkers, or would you be interested in a little action?

Paul finds that events are taking a somewhat unexpected turn.



Harry: You got to learn to fit in, if not, I can't have you around.

Paul has departed, and during the nightly game of gin rummy Harry takes another opportunity to remind Billie of her social failings. Totting up her winnings, she is maddeningly indifferent to his remarks.



(Left):
Billie: Do you hate him like poison?
Paul: Who, Harry?



(Above):
Billie consults the dictionary which is kept handy on a stand. It is three months later and an astonishing change has come over the scene. *Paul Verrall* has gone far beyond his allotted task of putting some polish on *Billie* and instead has given her a lightning and intensive course in "Culture," with special reference to the real significance of *Harry's* anti-social activities. Naturally the gaps in *Billie's* knowledge are still stupendous and she makes some wonderful schoolgirl howlers. Meantime, *Harry*, bewildered and enraged by the turn of events, steps into the arena to try and undo what *Paul* has done.

(Left):
Harry: You think you know so much—what's a peninsula?
Billie: It's that new medicine.



Billie: Harry, please! don't!

The rift widens between Harry and Billie, now that the latter has begun to think and to express herself on Harry's illicit activities.



Harry: Didn't you ever see a person reading a book, for Pete's sake?

Harry, frustrated and thwarted by Billie's new outlook, takes up a book to investigate, but the effort to read proves too much of a strain.

Harry : There's some kind of jokes I don't like.

The moment when Harry discovers that Billie, who is now determined to end her association with him, has walked out with the papers that would incriminate him if made public.



Harry : All right, if you want to play it rough I know how to do that, too.

Harry corners Billie and Paul and it looks as though the two young people are in for some rough gangster stuff.





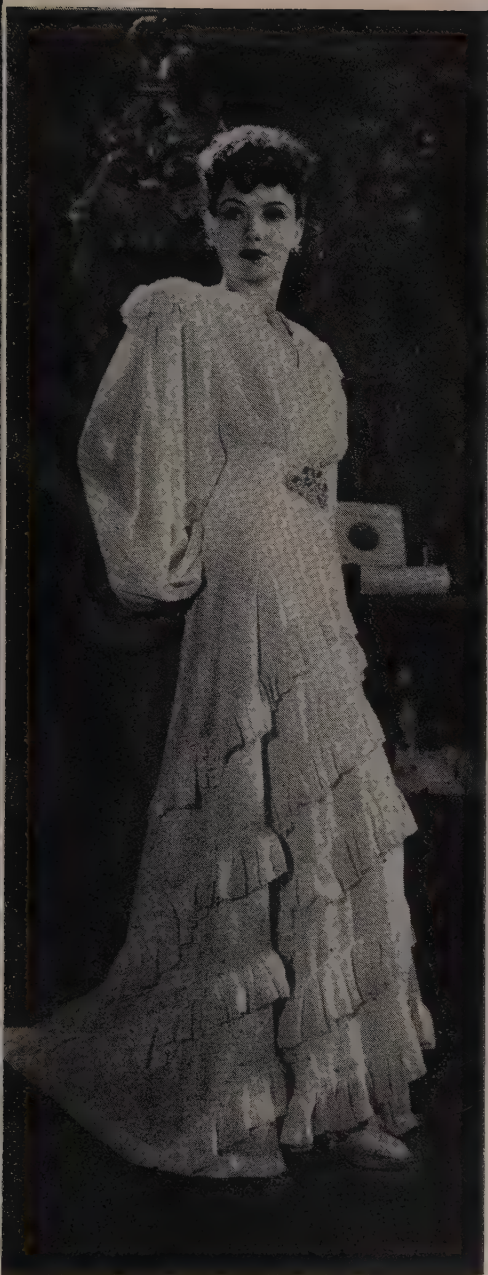
Harry : I think you've got something by mistake that belongs to me.
 Harry searches Paul for the missing papers.



Another scene during the *melee* which comes towards the end of the play. However, Harry Brock is finally outwitted by Paul and Billie, and it goes without saying that Billie and her new young man walk out of Harry's life for ever.



HARTLEY POWER
as
Harry Brock



YOLANDE DONLAN
as
Billie Dawn



Portrait by Denis de Marney

ANTHONY BURKE

THE world of fashion is not present at every major ballet event in London. It was conspicuously absent from the New Theatre one Sunday afternoon just a year ago, and in consequence missed witnessing the birth of Anthony Burke as choreographer. The occasion was the annual *matinée* of the Royal Academy of Dancing Production Club. No doubt sophisticated balletomanes stayed away, thinking it would be little more than a students' display. They could hardly have been more grossly mistaken.

People who matter in the ballet-world were there. The welcome presence of Adeline Genée lent distinction to the occasion. Karsavina watched every step, sincerely hoping the present generation could carry on the great tradition of St. Petersburg. Idzikovsky came along to see the first performance of *Masquerade*, a ballet with music by Schumann and choreography by Anthony Burke, of the Sadler's Wells Company at Covent Garden, who, as a dancer, combines a distinguished stage presence with a distinctive flair for characterisation.

Masquerade, with its striking black and scarlet costumes designed by Burke himself, turned out to be a ballet of considerable charm. It was something more than a series of dance-steps casually wedded to Schumann's music. It was a ballet with a definite dance pattern. Quite obviously this new choreographer had something to say and had given more than cursory thought to his work. He realised that a ballet should evoke either a mood or a style and he knew the right way to gain his effects, inspiring the artists and delighting the audience. On the fall of the curtain Idzikovsky presented young Burke

New Ballets for New Dancers by ERIC JOHNS

with a silver harlequin, the RAD Production Club's annual award for choreography. Ballet was richer for this discovery and it was encouraging to see such talent publicly acclaimed.

On the way home one wondered what would happen. Would the statuette simply adorn Burke's mantelpiece, or might it possibly mark the beginning of an active career? Obviously choreography was Burke's ideal means of theatrical expression, and he was no slavish imitator of people who had gone before. He was an individualist, having learnt his job in the best possible way, joining the corps de ballet and working under such masterly choreographers as De Valois, Ashton and Helpmann, before attempting to emerge on his own account.

Ninette de Valois has set out to see that our native ballet talent gains opportunity as well as recognition. It is fortunate for Anthony Burke that his particular flair blossomed in 1946, rather than in 1926, or even 1936, when he might have been a voice crying in the wilderness. Last autumn under the direction of De Valois, a second, but by no means second-rate, company, known as the Opera-Ballet, took possession of Sadler's Wells Theatre, the average age of the artists being eighteen. The experimental nature of this new company of dancers and choreographers gave Burke his chance, and he made a bid.

Being 25, he saw the opportunity of joining the company as one of their senior and more experienced dancers, and, what was far more stimulating, as a choreographer. By permitting him to resign from the Covent Garden Company to join the Opera-Ballet in Rosebery Avenue, De Valois gave him his big chance. In him she saw a choreographer seeking new forms of expression, so she supplied him with the necessary means.

The company at Sadler's Wells, now known as the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet, is composed of dancers who are something more than pupils, though they naturally have much to learn at the age of eighteen. There is no necessity to excuse their youth. It is their asset and their attraction. The future of ballet depends upon these youngsters, who will ensure that continual flow of dancers and ideas which keeps the art of the dance alive. Covent Garden offers classics danced by the most polished artists this country has produced; Sadler's Wells offers new ballets created specially for a troupe of dancers in their formative years, seeking their way and improving their technique as they pass from role to role.

(Continued on page 32)



Roberts (ex-Merchant Navy): I got drunk one night in Rio. What did you do?

An early scene in the play. (L. to R.): Basil Gordon as 3804 Medworth (ex-Schoolmaster), Julian Somers as 1091 O'Brien (Irish rebel), Stanley Rose as 3762 Brown, Peter Doughty as 6147 Richards, Barry Phelps as 6145 Spencer, Jonathan Mackwood as 6146 Roberts, Owen Holder as 4288 Smith, and Harry Quashie as 2746 Anderson.



Anderson: I'm going to cry, won't somebody sing a song?

“*Now Barabbas*” AT THE VAUDEVILLE

IT IS not often that London has the privilege of seeing so human a documentary as this moving play on prison life by William Douglas Home. *Now Barabbas* was reviewed at length in a previous issue and it only remains to be said that nothing is spared to convey the devastating effects of a prison sentence, made all the more apparent because each character is drawn

with a sure touch and never ceases to be an individual personality. Colin Chandler has both designed the set and directed the play, the latter no mean feat, for on the surface there is not much excitement or glamour to be extracted from a sincere portrayal of the passage of fourteen days inside an English prison.

(Pictures by Angus McBean)



Officer Jackson (David Duncan): Make less noise in here!

The scene after O'Brien has attacked the ex-schoolmaster and has in turn been attacked by Smith. There is a constant clash of temperaments among the ill-assorted prisoners, and their many hours of enforced idleness and close confinement leads to a display of unnatural emotions.



The Governor: . . . the law must take its normal course.

A tense moment in the condemned cell when the Governor tells the condemned man that the petition for his reprieve has failed. (*L. to R.*): Joss Clewes as Chief Officer Webb, Tristan Rawson as the Governor, Percy Walsh as Officer Jones, Richard Longman as Tufnell, and Richard Foat as Officer Gale.



Tufnell: . . . you lied—you know you lied!

Tufnell turns on the Chaplain (Denis Webb), after the interview with the Governor. The boy is to be hanged for murdering a policeman whom he thought had insulted his girl, and he now shows once again evidence of his uncontrollable temper.

A black and white photograph of a group of people in a room. A man in a dark coat and hat stands in the center, looking down at a table. Several other people are seated or standing around the table, looking at him or the items on the table. A sign on the wall reads: "WARNING: PROHIBITION ON THE IMPORTATION OF ANY MONEY CLOTHING; FOOD DRINK TOBACCO; LETTERS PAPER BOOKS ETC. OR ANY OTHER ARTICLES WHATEVER AND THOSE SO CONVEYED CONSIDERED AS THURSDAY WITHIN. VIOLATION MAY BE PENALIZED BY THE".

A black and white photograph of four men in a room. On the left, a man with a mustache sits with his hand to his face. In the center, a man sits with his back to the camera. On the right, a man in a light jacket sits facing the others. Two other men stand in the background. The room has a textured wall and a small table with a lamp.

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Whispers from the Wings

BY
LOOKER ON

THE stupendous success of *Oklahoma* at Drury Lane encouraged Noel Coward to discuss English and American musicals in his dressing room at the Haymarket where, among West End straight shows, his own sell-out success, *Present Laughter*, is box-office attraction number one.

"*Oklahoma* is going to make English managers pull their socks up," remarked Mr. Coward. "In the boom days of the war anything got by. Money was plentiful and spent recklessly by men and women on leave from the Forces and the factories. It is a different tale now. Playgoers want value for their money, and where musical shows are concerned, Americans know how to give it. The average English musical is deplorable when compared with its Broadway counterpart. With such established New York successes as *Carousel*, *Annie Get Your Gun* and *Finian's Rainbow* still to be imported, our English musicals look like having a thin time.

"The quality of these American shows is so good that they can stand on their own feet and run for years without stars. Something like five different casts have come and gone to keep *Oklahoma* running at New York's St. James' Theatre, where it opened in 1943, but the play is so good that it survives these changes and still packs the house.

"Dancing is so much better in American shows. It is never slapdash, as Americans seem to dance more naturally than we do, taking the theatre so much more seriously and paying so much more attention to detail. There seem to be more people who can sing and dance in America, possibly on account of the vast entertainment industry of Hollywood offering a wider market for talent.

"Vitality is one of the secrets of success in the theatre, and no one knows it better than the Americans. The youthful dash of the *Oklahoma* cast electrifies the house and has the audience talking about the play for weeks afterwards. There is too much casual acting over here, particularly on the musical stage, where artists lack American discipline. There is more competition over there. They have to work harder, and fight harder to keep their place, which means that the standard is always high.

"American audiences never tolerate bad performances. They don't applaud artists simply because they are old and have been entertaining the public for a long time. That is a very kind English trait, but not very healthy for the theatre, as it encourages stars to walk through their parts,



Studio Carlet

NOEL COWARD

A characteristic new study of Mr. Coward, who is once again delighting West End audiences in the role of Garry Essendine, in his own play, *Present Laughter*.

merely on the strength of a past reputation.

"Type-casting is easier in America. The population is so mixed that one can get Latins, Slavs, Teutons or Orientals by the dozen for any part that needs casting, which means that even minor roles are excellently filled on Broadway.

"By way of contrast our straight theatre is something to be proud of. Stars like Yvonne Arnaud work miracles every night in the West End. In *Jane* her sheer technical supremacy twists the most ordinary line into a gem of wit. But the smaller theatres are producing excellent fare without star aid. When the Lindsey put on *Power Without Glory* I felt I had not seen such good acting for years, though none of the cast had ever enjoyed the distinction of star billing. Fearing I might have been carried away, I went to see the play again at the Fortune, when I liked it even more! Such first-rate acting is not to be despised because it originated in an outlying theatre without the glitter of a West End premiere. In America it would be a smash hit. It is up to London playgoers to prove they know a good play when they see one."



(Top): Housewives Bud Flanagan and Teddie Knox, together with the rest of the Crazy Gang—Nervo, Naughton and Gold—have neighbours' quarrels and enjoy the usual titbits of gossip in "prefabricated" "Bellevue Crescent." (Above): Another hilarious skit, in which hairdressers Nervo and Knox carry out their duties with merciless efficiency.

"Together Again"

AT THE VICTORIA PALACE

PICTURES

BY

HERBERT PAUL

(Photos) LTD.

● SOME scenes from Jack Hylton's new Crazy Gang show which is drawing huge crowds at the Victoria Palace. Apart from the most welcome return of the Crazy Gang, of pre-war fame, the show is full of song, dance and colour, and is a welcome addition to London's gayer entertainment.



(Top): Anne Jay dances with Lauri Lupino Lane (left of picture) in "Way Down East," one of a colourful series of numbers entitled *The Lights of London*. (Above): Against the placid background of glossy palms the act of the Three Bentley Sisters with their perfect timing and graceful movement is one of the highlights of the show. (Below, left): The Radio Revellers, well-known broadcasting variety quartet, bring their radio parody *Desert Island Discs* to the stage; and (Below, right): Janik Arnaut slithers, slinks and coils herself around Christian Arnaut in a fascinating snake dance, another high-spot of *Together Again*.



Echoes from Broadway

BY OUR AMERICAN CORRESPONDENT E. MAWBY GREEN



"I'll go home with Bonnie Jean," dance highlight in *Brigadoon*. (Centre): James Mitchell and Lidiya Franklin. (Picture by Vandamm).

WHILE the Pulitzer Prize Committee failed to find any American play worthy of its annual award, the New York Drama Critics' Circle selected Arthur Miller's *All My Sons* as the best American play of the season. According to the citation the award went to *All My Sons* "Because of the frank and uncompromising presentation of a timely and important theme; because of the honesty of the writing and the accumulative power of the scenes, and because it reveals a genuine instinct for the theatre in an intelligent and thoughtful new playwright." Eugene O'Neill's *The Iceman Cometh* was runner-up. In the foreign division Jean-Paul Sartre's *No Exit* (*Vicious Circle* in London) walked away with the honour, and *Brigadoon* was voted the best musical over *Finian's Rainbow*.

It is of particular interest to note that when *All My Sons* opened the daily reviewers came forth with five favourable notices as against four unfavourable, and *No Exit* was even more badly battered. However they managed to win the award because the Drama Critics' Circle consists of about fifteen magazine reviewers besides the nine local newspaper critics. But these awards have once again raised the question of how much influence these local newspaper critics have on the box office. The critics themselves tend to minimise their power, saying the public will ferret out a good

play no matter what—but *No Exit* after its critical drubbing had to close in three weeks and *All My Sons*, until the announcement of the award, did average business, never selling out and never becoming the smash hit it deserved to be. But since the award, business has increased \$7,000 in two weeks!

Cheryl Crawford's production of *Brigadoon* is an excellent example of the "musical play" with book, music and dances so well integrated that it is impossible to tell where one leaves off and the other begins, and as such, not an unreasonable choice for the title of best musical of the year. But it does lack the originality, freshness and verve of *Finian's Rainbow*, which to our mind is more deserving.

Alan Jay Lerner's book for *Brigadoon*, which tells of a village in Scotland that comes to life for only one day every 100 years and of the two 1947 Americans who come upon this town, one to fall in love with a 1747 Scotch lass and eventually to stay with her in this enchanted town while the other comes back to our strident world, is strikingly similar to a German short story, *Germelshausen*, written in the 1800's by Friedrich Wilhelm Gerstacker. Mr. Lerner said he was not aware of the existence of this story until after a friend had read *Brigadoon* and informed him of it. He thereupon did some research and "was astounded to learn that legends of disappearing towns can be found in the folk-

lore of many, many countries." However, we found this story of unconscious literature coincidence a good deal more absorbing than the plot of *Brigadoon* (which definitely puts us in the minority), and so while we watched the performance we had plenty of time to trace back other similarities in the production. Besides the different century romance which is *Berkeley Square*, it was very obvious that the man-hungry Meg Brockie played by Pamela Britton was none other than our old friend Ado Annie of *Oklahoma!* in plaids, and her song, "The Love of My Life" a variation of "I Cain't Say No." Miss Britton, incidentally, played Ado Annie in Chicago. But the lyrics of her other song, "My Mother's Wedding Day," sounded startlingly like a song we heard Phil Regan, a popular Irish crooner, sing on a vaudeville programme a few months back — only he rattled off Irish names instead of Scotch. And the comedy part of Jeff Douglas, the American who goes back to 'America, played by George Keane is nothing but an enlargement of a character the same author created for an English comedian, Tom Helmore, in last season's *The Day Before Spring*. Mr. Helmore, like Mr. Keane, scored a personal success in this role only Mr. Helmore signed a Hollywood contract and hasn't been heard of since. And while we are at it, we might as well speak sacrilege—Agnes de Mille's dances, with one exception, looked exactly like, well—Agnes de Mille dances. This doesn't mean they weren't good, it's just that we felt we had seen them all before.

We suppose this rather blasé approach of ours to a play which is delighting thousands of theatregoers should be chalked up to the occupational hazard of seeing too many plays. But even if we seem a bit jaded, we can still look forward with enthusiasm to the Theatre Guild's first production of next season—Rodgers and Hammerstein's new musical *Allegro*. We feel sure they'll come up with something fresh!

Encouraged by the New York Music Critics' reception to two chamber operas by Gian-Carlo Menotti, *The Telephone* and *The Medium*, when produced for a few performances "off Broadway," the new producing firm of Chandler Cowles and Efrem Zimbalist, Jr., in association with Edith Lutens, decided to see how they would stand up as theatre fare on Broadway. The drama reviewers were almost equally as enthusiastic, but it is a little too early to tell how the public will respond to this unusual change of musical diet.

The curtain raiser, *The Telephone*, cleverly sub-titled "L'Amour A Trois," is an amusing revue sketch told in song of a young man (Frank Rogier) who before leaving town wants to propose to his girl (Marilyn Cotlow), but she's one of those female telephone addicts, and he can't get

a word in edgewise until he leaves the house, goes to the railway station and dials her number! *The Medium*, on the other hand, is a Grand Guignol horror story of a coarse, blowsy faker who in one of her trumped-up seances thinks she feels a hand at her throat and almost drives herself insane with the thought she might have real occult powers. It is tremendously effective theatre, particularly with the American contralto, Marie Powers, brilliantly singing and acting the title role. Maggie Teyte has been impressed with these works and has announced she will sing them at Covent Garden in September.

George Abbott's current musical *Barefoot Boy With Cheek* has been compared not too unfavourably with his earlier college campus frolic, *Best Foot Forward*. If not of the same high quality of the earlier effort, *Barefoot Boy With Cheek* still has the same type of music and lyrics, the same young fresh talent, the same speedy dances (with the necessary nod towards ballet), and Mr. Abbott's same driving direction. The only trouble is that Max Shulman's very clever book is *satire*, kidding particularly the Communist Party line on a Mid-Western campus, and demands an entirely different treatment from the straight comedy one it got.

At last we are able to happily report that the American Repertory Theatre is associated with a hit. In conjunction with Rita Hassan they are sponsoring Eva Le Gallienne's truly wonderful production of *Alice in Wonderland*. Based on the Tenniel drawings; with the young dancer of *Carousel*, Bambi Linn, making a perfect Alice; with Remo Bufano's masks hiding spirited actors and Richard Addinsell's delightful musical score, no Lewis Carroll fan can ask for anything more. Parents make a "must" of taking their offspring to the fantasy and at 11 o'clock you can hear a good many young fry complaining they're just as tired as the Red Chess Queen, but our favourite story about children at the theatre comes from the boy who sat behind us. As each new character made his entrance, the boy's father would say: "That's the White Rabbit," or "The Mouse," or "The Dodo," or "The Eaglet," etc. But when Miss Le Gallienne came on as the White Chess Queen, the fond father thought she deserved special mention being the guiding light behind the ingenious production, so he said: "That's Eva Le Gallienne," to which the boy innocently responded: "What's a Le Gallienne?"

James Parish's rather trite drama *Message for Margaret*, which served Flora Robson so well as a vehicle in London, failed to do the same for Mady Christians here and expired after five performances, even though we had the added attraction of Miriam Hopkins co-starring as the other Margaret.



Memorial Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon.

The Season at Stratford

By HAROLD MATTHEWS

SHAKESPEARE Festival 1947 is now in full swing and attracts full houses. The unity of control and the continuity of the work result in the regular release of productions and the linking of one Festival with the next. At the moment five of Shakespeare's plays and one of Marlowe's are in the programme, but of these six plays only *Romeo and Juliet* and *Twelfth Night* are new productions. The other plays are revivals from last year's Festival. Later on, more plays will be added to the present programme, to be repeated next year.

Walter Hudd's production of *Twelfth Night* is polished and thorough, informed with taste and invention. The "business" is fresh, original and various, and never prolonged. The scenery and costumes by Riette Sturge Moore are exceedingly decorative as well as apt to their purposes. Walter Hudd himself plays Malvolio and shows the steward's full character with a clever blend of comicality and sympathy. Malvolio cannot be labelled fool, prig and puritan and dismissed. He is all these things and much more; he is a man for all that. Walter Hudd's portrayal convinces us of this, should we need convincing.

Viola is endowed with all the intelligence and sprightliness of Beatrix Lehmann and becomes a young person to be reckoned with. It is no wonder that she is signing documents on behalf of the Duke of Illyria after but three days in his employ. Laurence Payne plays brother Sebastian, and the likeness achieved is remarkable. These two bring new blood to lackadaisical Illyria. To their tinder, the flax is not wanting. In the person of Olivia it is ready for ignition. Daphne Slater makes Olivia young and high-spirited. She is accompanied by priest, duenna and four or five female mutes in sober sables and it rather seems that mourning for her brother is enforced upon her. John Blatchley, Paul Scofield and Dudley Jones, as Sir Toby, Sir Andrew and Feste, sing carols in an arbour under the stars and make their drunken orgy so melodious that the appearance of Malvolio to terminate it is not so welcome as it has been in other times. Helen Burns as a vivacious Maria, significantly out of mourning.

Peter Brook's production of *Romeo and Juliet* is a fresh rendering, vigorous, colourful and untrammelled by tradition or old usage. The picture of Verona's passing show is striking. Hot, arid, bare, brown and enclosed, it resembles Oscar Asche's Old Baghdad, thronged with negroes, Jews and water-sellers. The crowd scenes are lively and well managed. The fights between Montagues and Capulets are of exceptional magnitude, rending the city, and giving ample occasion for the black displeasure of their "moved prince" (Robert Harris). The duelling has been arranged by Rex Rickman and Patrick Crean and is a notable feature of the production. The scenery by Rolf Gérard is reminiscent of early Italian paintings. It is artistically satisfying and functions well. For instance, from the time of the secretly wedded lovers' talk about the lark and the nightingale to the discovery of Juliet's presumed death, Juliet's bed, her balcony, the hall below and outside the house are all simultaneously visible. This is a most effective device, showing mourning in Juliet's chamber as Paris' musicians arrive to play an epithalamium. All the scenery functions well and suggests more than it displays. The costumes, also by Rolf Gérard, merge towards the fantastic and the "1,001 Nights." Roberto Gerhard's incidental music is also Oriental in suggestion and a little too bizarre. Spectacle, rather than poetry, calls for admiration in this production and visually the story is well told. It is a Boy meets Girl story, ending tragically. They meet at Capulet's "old accustomed feast" to which Romeo, attired as a pilgrim, has gone with a party of mummers, and they are mutually infatuated. All this is quite convincing. Daphne Slater looks Juliet and can be heard. The ardour is there. Equally ardent and audible is Laurence Payne as Romeo; a pleasant and graceful Romeo, saturnine yet swift to smile. His smile transforms his face and the flash from his eyes when he smiles banishes the cloud from his ever-lowering brows. When things go wrong, he defies the stars and one takes note of his attitude. Juliet's part in the tragedy is more difficult to portray. Daphne Slater depicts the kind of agony to which

smashing glass might bring relief. Beatrix Lehmann plays the Nurse on Susan Nipper lines. It is a strong characterisation. Costume and mien create the fancy of a figure by Jan Steen miraculously introduced into a picture by Veronese. Walter Hudd's genial, but irascible old Capulet make all his scenes convincing and true to human nature. One of the more generally acceptable innovations is the rendering of Mercutio's Queen Mab speech, always a test and sometimes a bore. Paul Scofield, a most interesting and pleasing Mercutio, delivers the speech pensively, almost dreamily, in the gloaming as the mummers array themselves for their invasion of Capulet's feast.

The play closes when Juliet dies. It may be argued that what follows is anti-climax. The present treatment is certainly effective. The play opens and closes in darkness. Prologue and closing lines are spoken extremely well by an anonymous actor palely silhouetted in surrounding gloom.

The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus is cleverly produced by Walter Hudd, with proper variety and a nice control of light and shade. Reading the play or hearing it broadcast leaves one unprepared for its tremendous power in performance. The horse-play and comic business, so tedious to the reader, are in action the only proper and acceptable form of light relief that is needed or could be allowed. Wit involves irreverence; humour reflection. Horse-play and coarse practical joking do not deflect nor detract from the mood of piety, faith and awe which the seriousness of the play proper induces and must maintain throughout for its true success. The receptive mood of the audience, created by the powerful opening scenes, is held in suspense by the conjuring antics and never dispelled.

The long and exhausting role of Faustus seems to demand more and ever more strength of voice, imagination and magnetic power from the actor adequately to sustain right to the final doom. This is Robert Harris' greatest achievement in this Festival. The measured richness of his voice worthily carry Marlowe's majestic lines. He rises to great heights of fearful tragedy in the final scene when he stands a lone figure, in mid-air with a vast semi-circle of blue light behind him and the red reflection of Hell fires shining from below.

Paul Scofield is patient, poised, still and sinister as Mephistopheles. Dudley Jones seems to carry a comic aura which is of great value in the knock-about interludes. William Avenell is dignified and impressive as Lucifer, speaking words of weight, meaning and beauty so that nothing of this is lost. Among innumerable small parts, the Duke of Anholt by Myles Eason is a nice piece of near-caricature.

Measure for Measure is Frank McMullan's 1946 production directed by Ronald Giffen.

The giddy license and police surveillance obtaining in Vienna even in Shakespeare's conception of the city are depicted at the opening of the play in dumb show. The performance is distinguished in its pageantry. Pomp and ceremony mark the Duke's departure and return. The token scenery, from designs by Otis Riggs, is pleasing, sufficient and unobtrusive. The case of Angelo is readily understood by a generation that knows, however slightly, the German psychologists. A ruler who sought to stamp out all fleshly indulgence would be just the man to attempt to violate a novice and make a boch of the affair. Familiar devices are used to set matters right. The ingenious Friar is this time the absent Duke himself, busy daily in Vienna and never recognised. The substituted bed-fellow, as in *All's Well*, has become Tennyson's *Mariana* by adoption. The Friar Duke substitutes the only woman who wants Angelo for the only woman Angelo wants and thus provides a way out for persecuted Isabella, whose inflexible chastity has so favourably impressed him that he offers her his hand in marriage. Michael Golden is calm and impassive, as befits a duke, however capricious, and a friar, however bogus. Escalus (Douglas Seale) and Provost (William Avenell) are handsome figures of noble integrity and fair of voice. Robert Harris is not sinister or naturally cruel, but a self-torturing, Freudian Angelo. It is clear he will be outwitted by chaste Isabella, so metallic and clear-sighted, for Beatrix Lehmann plays Isabella. The Lucio of Paul Scofield is outstanding, a lively impudent rake, warm-hearted, disinterestedly interested in his fellow-men, and, without a speck of smugness, high in his own esteem. Dudley Jones gives a capital performance as Pompey. His comic turn with the headsman's axe one would like to see again. The whole Barnadine episode has a kind of Dickensian-Gilbertian humour. Myles Eason wins much sympathy from first to last for unfortunate Claudio, crushed between the mill-stones of Angelo's tyranny and Isabella's chastity. Muriel Davidson supports with dignity the undignified role of the castaway, Mariana.

Love's Labour's Lost is revived from last year. There have been several changes in the cast, but individual performances count for less and are less remarkable than Peter Brook's production. The chief charm of the entertainment is its pictorial quality. Reginald Leefe, who designed the scenery and costumes, has reason to be satisfied.

Little need be said about *The Tempest*. Eric Crozier's production of last year has been reproduced by Norman Wright, with the same scenery and costumes by Paul Shelving. It may be briefly described as John Wesley's sermons illustrated from Mrs. Jarley's Waxworks.

Page of Theatre History Comes to Life By LOUIS POVEL

This interesting description which comes to us from Holland is reminiscent of some of our own present-day travelling companies.

THE wagon stage of the Middle Ages had a glorious revival at the Dutch town of Hilversum some months ago when a band of professional and non-professional actors produced the 15th Century French farce, *Maitre Pathelin*.

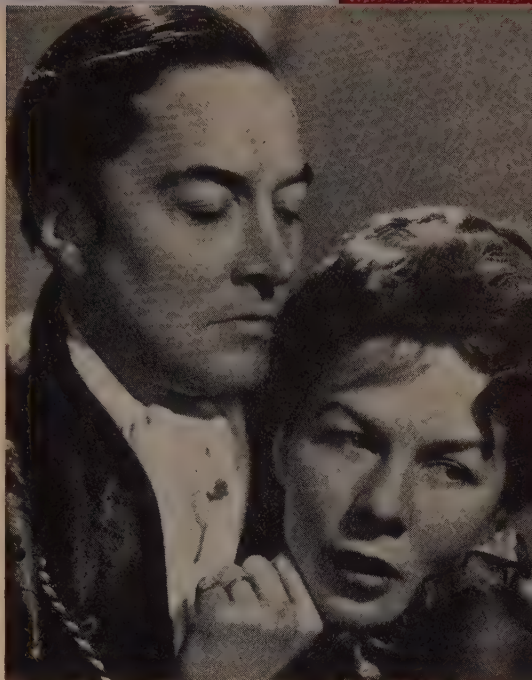
The show was advertised and performed in the style of the Middle Ages (Producer: Thom Ros); a motor car with trailer being the only concession to modern times. The attractive but simple set: two primitive houses with a gate and double doors between them, was built on a trailer, attached to a motor truck. The trailer was manned by the ten actors; the Fool had his place on top of the truck driver's cabin. This vehicle toured the streets of Hilversum (a town of 90,000 inhabitants) and when the ringing of bells and the beating on the fool's gong attracted people, the car stopped, the Fool advertised the show in a witty speech and on went the car to reach its final destination which was successively the inner court of a school, a small square and a quiet street.

There a rostrum, equipped with microphones, amplifier and loudspeakers, had been erected in the meantime. The trailer with the set was driven behind it, the Fool jumped down from his seat and opened the show with his prologue.

The simple and juicy story of the poor but cunning lawyer Pathelin who succeeds in obtaining material for a new suit of clothes without paying for it is still as young and gay as it must have been to Frenchmen on its first night in 1465. Love and lovers have not changed since and even the shepherd who sells his master's sheep clandestinely to a butcher is an only too-well-known figure in war-time and post war-time Holland. The Dutch writer Alfons Laudy adapted the play still more to modern times by introducing the Fool. This typical character of Middle Ages comedy acted in Laudy's brilliantly written prologue and epilogue, as well as in two interludes with Maitre Pathelin himself, as a satirical commentator on the play and its application to everyday troubles in Holland.

The scheme was sponsored by the Vereeniging tot Veredeling van het Volksvermaak (Society for the Improvement of Public Amusement) and the sale of tickets had been organised by local societies in different quarters of the town. To keep even financial matters in old style, however, the performance ended with the fool mixing with the audience, cap in hand, humbly asking for a gift.

(Continued bottom right, page 35)



John Vickers

(Above):

WENDY HILLER as Tess, with HENRY MOLLISON as Alec D'Urberville in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, which opened a short season at the Piccadilly Theatre on 20th May. The play, adapted from Hardy's novel by Ronald Gow, is presented by the Old Vic Trust Ltd., in association with the Arts Council.

(Below):

JOYCE REDMAN, who is starring with Alan Webb in John Mills' production of Mary Hayley Bell's dramatic new play, *Angel*, which is at present on a short tour prior to presentation in the West End.



Angus McBean

New Ballets for New Dancers (Cont)

Such a responsive instrument is the choreographer's dream. When Burke joined the company he recognised in young dancers such as Anne Heaton, Nadia Moore, Donald Britton and Michael Boulton tomorrow's big names in British ballet. Three older dancers, June Brae, Alan Carter and Leo Kersley, were there to add weight to the company, and Peggy van Praagh, as ballet-mistress, was ready to work night and day to build up an *ensemble* able to cope with the most exacting choreography.

Burke realised in no time that he was the member of a company that was something more than a stepping-stone to Covent Garden. Despite their immaturity, these dancers displayed a passionate unity and evidently had something of their own to say. With their good start, they had high hopes of an illustrious future. Their strength lay, not in their sophistication, but in their boundless enthusiasm and *joie de vivre*.

For his first work Burke chose *The Vagabonds*, a passionate story of love, jealousy and murder on a Wessex heath, based on a Thomas Hardy poem. Created expressly for the Opera-Ballet dancers, to music by John Ireland, it is easily their finest achievement to date. Having studied painting before he became a dancer, Burke has devised some superb grouping in this ballet and has lit his figures with breathtaking beauty. The plot is simple in construction and stark in its realism. It rivets the attention of the audience in the theatre and haunts their memory long afterwards. Rarely have glowing music and dramatic movement been so imaginatively welded together.

It was a master stroke of De Valois to allow new choreographers, such as Anthony Burke and Celia Franca, to create ballets for the new company. It gave the youngsters a sense of independence and a pride all of their own. After all, *The Vagabonds*, *Khadra*, and *Mardi Gras*, are their very own creations; no one else has performed them. It can be a little discouraging for young dancers to appear only in revivals of older ballets, calling forth, to their disadvantage, eternal comparison with Spessiva, Nijinsky, and other idols of an age long past. By creating new works they challenge new criticism.

De Valois is a wise psychologist. She knew what she was doing when she allowed Burke to work at Sadler's Wells. She saw the boy had rare talent and a burning desire to use it. She realised that the older artists at Covent Garden might not react too happily to dancing in ballets created by one with less experience than themselves. She inspired and flattered the youngsters at Sadler's Wells by presenting them with a choreographer of their own, old enough to command their respect and only too anxious to build up their repertoire. In *The Vagabonds* their co-operation has created a work to be proud of. Being something more than a seasonal novelty, it will take its place with *The Rake's Progress* and *Miracle in the Gorbals*, as a ballet essentially English and essentially worth performing long after the original creators have gone their way.

The high priests of large scale musical entertainment are becoming more ballet-conscious. It is customary now to engage genuine choreographers rather than old-fashioned dance-arrangers.

Solely on the strength of being deeply moved by the dramatic and emotional significance of *The Vagabonds*, Jack Hulbert commissioned Anthony Burke to create four new ballets for his production of the Chinese fairy tale operetta, *The Emperor's Nightingale*, to be seen in London this summer. This expansion of activity does not mean Burke is deserting ballet for musicals. On the contrary, while dancing with the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet during their current tour he is rehearsing the company in his latest contribution to their repertoire — *Baroque*. This new abstract ballet, to the music of Tchaikovsky's "Theme and Variations," will have its première at Sadler's Wells in the autumn when the company return to their permanent home. This time the world of fashion will certainly be there in force. It cannot afford to be caught napping a second time.

CORRECTION

In our May issue by an unfortunate error the name of the reviewer of the RADA matinee was given as Richard Hearne. This should have been Reginald Hearne, a young actor now with the Old Vic Company.

Also on page 22 of the same number, it was stated in error that John Toray appeared as Gasparo in the top right picture. This should have read: "Leonard White as Count Lodovico."

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The Theatre Comes First

by LOOKER-ON

IT is a heartening experience to talk with Douglass Montgomery, Canadian born actor and film star, who has just settled in a charming new home in a quiet back-water of Mayfair. Mr. Montgomery confessed that for him the theatre will always come first. Perhaps this is not surprising since he began his stage career as a child, and had played many important roles on Broadway before he began his film career in 1933. For instance, he succeeded Alfred Lunt, as Mosca, in *Volpone*, for the Guild Theatre in 1929. He remembers with gratitude all that he learnt from the incomparable Lunts, for it was with them that he made his first London appearance in *Caprice* at St. James' Theatre in 1928.

Subsequently, of course, Mr. Montgomery made a big name for himself in American films (he was leading man opposite Katherine Hepburn in *Little Women*, and opposite Margaret Sullavan in *Little Man, What Now?* etc.). When war broke out he joined up with the Canadian Army, from which he was later "borrowed" to appear in *The Way to the Stars*.

London had a brief opportunity of seeing him on the stage again in the special matinees of that interesting play, *The Wind is Ninety*, at the Apollo Theatre. Now, at last, with his demob. behind him, Mr. Montgomery has made his plans for the future. He hopes, now that he has settled in London, to be able to combine filming and the theatre, but, as he said, if a choice has to be made the stage will come first.

In America it is well nigh impossible to combine the two, for the distance between Hollywood and Broadway makes it out of the question. British films, no doubt, are finding the advantage of being able to draw so freely upon the best available stage talent over here, and this is possibly one of the chief reasons why our native films can command a growing superiority. Many see a danger in this for the English theatre, but if our leading actors and actresses will only approach it in the same spirit as Douglass Montgomery no problem will arise.

We are now eagerly awaiting confirmation of the news that he will shortly appear in the West End in a successful Broadway



DOUGLASS MONTGOMERY

play, with leading American players. Meantime, he has commitments for two English films.

Incidentally, now that there is a growing interchange of stage productions between New York and London, he finds the theatre more than ever interesting, for he has steadfastly kept abreast of happenings both sides of the Atlantic and has innumerable friends among leading stage personalities on Broadway.

Mr. Montgomery has a most interesting story to tell of his visit to Italy during last autumn and winter, when he was filming for an Italian studio, with Sarah Churchill, in the film *When in Rome*. He was acutely conscious of an artistic renaissance in Italy, and his experiences in and around the Eternal City were full of colour.

For one scene peasants were brought down from the hills, and the obvious fact that their mode of life has remained unchanged for centuries provided many amusing contrasts with the modernity of the studio.

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initiative in a step which, on the
development of affairs, was inevitable for
the amateur stage with its increasing num-
bers of drama festivals and competitions.

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Adjudicators. The demand for adjudicators
is rising, for competitive and non-competi-
tive festivals, so the new Guild is launched
with the following objects:—

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all organisations promoting amateur drama.

(b) To promote and establish high stan-
dards in the adjudication of plays, and by
this means to encourage the art of the
theatre among amateurs.

(c) To foster and protect the interests
of its members.

The Guild is an autonomous body, and
includes the leading adjudicators among its
foundation members. Its chairman is Mr.
E. Martin Browne, and its Hon. Secretary,
Mr. C. B. Purdom, 34 Barleycroft Road,
Welwyn Garden City.

The Civil Service Clerical Association
Theatre Group staged a new musical, *Go
Ahead Mr. Whittington*, at the Twentieth
Century Theatre in May.

An example of interchange between
countries was the visit of a Little Theatre
Company from Bussum, Holland, to High-
bury Little Theatre, Sutton Coldfield, in
a new play, *Rembrandt*, by Dr. H. M.
Planten. The Highbury group subsequently
visited Bussum. Before their return to
Holland, the Bussum Amateurs gave one
performance of the play at the Questors
Theatre, Ealing.

Revived from pre-war days, the Board
of Trade D.S. gave Campion's *The Lady
Killer* at the Ministry of Fuel's Theatre
Smith Square, in May. Following this
the company of fourteen toured army
camps with it at nights and weekends.

Twice nightly performances of Hale's
The Mocking Bird were given at Lewisham
Town Hall on 29th May by the Philip
Moore Productions, who in the summer will
take the play to the Garrison Theatres at
Deal, Chatham and Portsmouth for the
Royal Marine Association.

Highlight of the season just closed for
the Penrith Players, Cumberland, was the
broadcast of a one-act play to celebrate
their silver jubilee. James R. Gregson, the
Yorkshire playwright, in introducing the
Players over the air, gave a short history
of their work. He spoke of the late Horace
Page, an excellent amateur actor and great
stalwart of the Stockport Garrick Theatre
who took the torch to Penrith just over 20
years ago, where he and his wife gathered
other enthusiasts together to give the town
its own little theatre.

Bookshelf

- Reminiscences of the Russian Ballet.** Alexandre Benois, translated by Mary Britnieva. (Putnam, 25/- net).
- Shakespeare on the Soviet Stage.** Mikhail M. Morozov. (Soviet News, 5/-).
- Sadler's Wells Ballet at Covent Garden.** A Book of Photographs by Merlyn Severn. (The Bodley Head, 21/- net).
- Arthur Murphy.** An Eminent Dramatist of the 18th Century. John P. Emery. (Pennsylvania University Press. London, Geoffrey Cumberlege, 20/- net).
- The Dark Tower.** Louis Macneice. (Faber and Faber, 8/6 net).

THE place which Ballet has come to occupy in European art is not clearly understood without reference to the Russian background. Alexandre Benois enables us to appreciate this background, and to trace the momentous developments which it has nurtured. But he has given us much more than an academic record. He tells the story through the medium of personal experience, and in a narrative replete with vivid sketches of Russian life before the first great European war. The reader is introduced to the whole artistic life of St. Petersburg in the second half of the 19th century, while perhaps the most interesting feature is the story of the meeting with Diaghilev, in the author's student days, and their subsequent work together. Not only is this volume an indispensable contribution to the history of modern Ballet, but it is also a noteworthy commentary on numerous aspects of Russian life and character.

A close and valuable link between England and Russia, at a time when every link is needed, is to be found in the intense and real Russian love of Shakespeare. How real and authentic this is may be discovered by the reading of Prof. Morozov's little book, more particularly if care is taken to read Dr. J. Dover Wilson's Introduction. How suggestive, for example, to note the close association between scholar and actor in Russia. It is interesting to learn that *Othello* and *The Taming of the Shrew* are the two most frequently presented plays, while the essay on *Hamlet* will indicate the artistic devotion and integrity which marks the Russian treatment of Shakespeare's works. It is significant that the writer emphasises the point that in their cautious approach to *Hamlet* the Russian theatres have "displayed a feeling of respect for the finest thing that has ever been created by the mind of man."

Miss Merlyn Severn has given us another book of action photographs derived from recent ballet productions at Covent Garden. It is all excellent work, and reveals to the eye the versatility and beauty of choreography and dance by the Sadler's Wells Company. It is a book which every balletomane will wish to possess.

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Page of Theatre History (Cont.)

It was more than an experiment in reviving theatre history, for it proved to be a living and much enjoyed reality. The press wrote about a successful experiment and the audience seemed to like it very much. Your reporter, however, who played the part of the Fool, is sure that the actors enjoyed it immensely and look back upon it as one of the dearest memories of their stage career.

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Any writer who turns to the English theatre of the 18th century can be sure of a rich yield, more particularly if his theme includes much in the realm of letters in that fertile and graceful period. But while the more famous names in the age of Garrick and Goldsmith are, no doubt, familiar, it may be we have overlooked or forgotten Arthur Murphy. If so, we must indeed be grateful to Mr. John P. Emery for giving us the story of Murphy's life, in a book so full of interest that every page will rivet attention. Murphy himself was a man of parts, beginning life as a clerk, then serving his apprenticeship in journalism under the influence of the famous Fielding, and coming rapidly into the orbit of theatrical life as actor and playwright. Next we find him turning to the law, with the object, it would seem, of a more secure income. But what a commentary on the popular attitude to the theatre of the time that he found, at first, the legal door closed against him owing to his stage association, until high placed influence prepared the way. The young man also appears to have been one of the number who fell victim to the charms of the fascinating Peg Woffington.

Then we have delightful glimpses of his friendships with the famous of the time: Garrick, Johnson, Goldsmith, Reynolds (who painted his portrait), Mrs. Thrale, and others. Mr. Emery has the gift of recapturing with ease the spirit of time and place, and we easily feel that we are mingling ourselves with the colourful human life of 18th century Drury Lane and anecdote and fruitful references.

The radio script as it relates to drama is a new feature. Most of us as we listen to the smooth flow of words in a broadcast play may easily forget the skill demanded in sustaining interest simply with words and ideas as the link. More particularly is the achievement noteworthy when the theme is delicately symbolical and deliberately allegorical. An example of marked success in this field is presented by *The Dark Tower*, and some of the other scripts (particularly *The Nosebag*) included in Mr. Louis Macniece's collection which he has selected for publication. The General Introduction merits careful reading as it defines the task which has to be fulfilled if such scripts are to be a success.

L. J.

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